

STAFF ANALYSIS

FLORENCE-FIRESTONE ZONING STUDY

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The unincorporated community of Florence-Firestone is administratively divided between the First and Second Supervisorial Districts. The community is 3.6 square miles in area and is comprised of a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Conflicts between incompatible land uses and inappropriate zoning patterns exist in several areas of the community (e.g. industrial uses are interspersed with residential uses).

To address these issues, the Department of Regional Planning began the Florence-Firestone zoning study and prepared a Background Report. **(See Tab A)**. In order to solve the problems raised by the community and identified in the Background Report, staff has prepared the following recommendations: General Plan amendments, a series of zone changes and the establishment of a Community Standards District (CSD)

General Plan Amendment No. 02-085-(1,2)

Amendments to the land use policy map of the General Plan have been developed. The amendments are necessary to implement long-term changes in land use that will create a more compatible land use pattern **(See Tab B)**. The following amendments are being proposed for targeted areas, including: 2 (Low/Medium Density Residential) and 3 (Medium Density Residential) to C (Major Commercial), 3 (Medium Density Residential) to C (Major Commercial), I (Major Industrial) to 2 (Low/Medium Density Residential), I (Major Industrial) to 3 (Medium Density Residential), and I (Major Industrial) to C (Major Commercial).

Zone Change Case No. 02-085 – (1,2)

The objective of the draft zone changes is to update and improve the zoning pattern in the Florence-Firestone community. This will be accomplished by reducing the potential intensity of heavy industrial zoning, especially where adjacent to existing residential uses and by establishing zoning designations consistent with existing land uses. As a part of this process, zoning must also be changed to permit only development that would be appropriate within these areas. Consistency between the General Plan and zoning is required by state law. The following zone changes are being proposed for targeted areas: A-1 (Light Agriculture) to O-S (Open Space); R-3 (Limited Multiple Residence) to O-S (Open Space); M-1 (Light Manufacturing) to R-2 (Two-Family Residence); M-1 (Light Manufacturing) to R-3 (Limited Multiple Residence); M-1-DP (Light Manufacturing-Development Program) to R-3 (Limited Multiple Residence); M-1 (Light Manufacturing) to C-3 (Unlimited Commercial); M-1 to C3-CRS (Unlimited Commercial-Commercial Residential); M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing) to O-S (Open

Space); M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing) to C-3 (Unlimited Commercial); M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing) to M-1 (Light Manufacturing). **(See Tabs C and D)**

Community Standards District

The draft CSD will establish new development standards and guidelines to help alleviate the land use and zoning issues identified for the community. The draft CSD addresses the following: property maintenance standards, landscaping, buffering and signage requirements, height and use limitations, minimum industrial lot area requirements, and minor variation provisions and area specific development standards for Florence Ave. In addition, the draft CSD includes a housing incentive provision allowing the continuation, improvement, and development of residential structures within the commercial zones. **(See Tab E)**

DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT PROPERTY

Location

The study area, approximately 3.6 square miles, is located about 6 miles south of downtown Los Angeles and is surrounded by the cities of Huntington Park, South Gate, and Los Angeles. Generally the boundaries of the Florence-Firestone area are Slauson Ave. to the north, portions of Wilmington Ave., Santa Fe Ave., and Alameda St. to the east, portions of 103rd St., and 92nd St., to the south and Central Ave. to the west.

Physical Features

The subject area is located in a highly urbanized, relatively flat part of the County and consists of a mixture of single-family, multi-family residences, commercial and industrial businesses. Many housing units are renter occupied and are in need of rehabilitation. A number of commercial and industrial businesses in the area are in need of repair and reinvestment.

Access

The subject area is accessible by the 110 Harbor Freeway on the west, the 105 Glenn M. Anderson Freeway on the south, and the 10 Santa Monica Freeway on the north. Street accessibility is facilitated by 8 major highways: Slauson Ave., Florence Ave., and Firestone Blvd. running east-west; and Central Ave., Compton Ave., Alameda St., Santa Fe Ave., and Long Beach Blvd. running north-south.

EXISTING LAND USES

The Florence-Firestone area is comprised of a mixture of single-family and multi-family residences interspersed with commercial and industrial businesses, parks, and schools. As a result, the area has many different and often competing uses.

Residential areas are surrounded by strips of commercial and industrial zones along prominent thoroughfares and along the Alameda Corridor. Commercial areas contain a

mix of residences, restaurants, automobile oriented shops and other retail and office uses.

The industrial areas are often adjacent to or across the street from residential and/or commercial uses and range from outside storage to manufacturing, warehouses, and auto related uses.

GENERAL PLAN

Countywide General Plan Designations

The subject area is not included within the boundaries of an area wide or community plan. The Countywide General Plan depicts the westerly and easterly portions of the subject area within the Major Industrial classification and the interiors ranging from Low to Medium Density Residential. The General Plan depicts Major Commercial along the main thoroughfares of the community (Florence Ave., Firestone Blvd., and Compton Ave.)

Consistency Analysis

The recommended zone changes generally reflect existing uses of the properties and promote a more logical zoning pattern by reducing the potential for incompatible land uses. For example:

- The draft zone changes for the four parks in Florence-Firestone, from R-3, M-2, and A-1 to O-S are consistent with the O (Open Space) General Plan classification in the subject area.
- The draft zone change of the property located at 5955 Hooper Ave., from M-1-DP to R3 is consistent with the General Plan designation of 3 (Medium Density Residential).
- The draft zone change from M-1 to R-2 and R-3 on 58th Dr. and 59th St. is consistent with the proposed 2 (Low/Medium Density Residential) and 3 (Medium Density Residential) General Plan designation.
- The existing industrial zoning of the parcel on Gage Ave. is incompatible with the surrounding land uses and does not reflect the current development by Merona Development into a shopping center (Gage Village Shopping). The draft zone change to C-3 is compatible with the proposed C (Major Commercial) category.
- The existing land uses along Compton and Florence Avenues. are primarily commercial retail. The area does not appear to be developing toward uses associated with the current M-1 zoning but would be compatible with the draft zone change to C-3. This would be consistent with the C (Major Commercial) General Plan land use designation.

- The properties on Lou Dillon Ave. have split zones (M-1 & R-3), which allow the establishment of conflicting residential and industrial uses on the same parcel. The draft zone change is compatible with the proposed 3 (Medium Density Residential) land use designation.
- The draft zone changes from M-3 to M-1 along the west side of Wilmington Ave. are consistent with the existing I (Major Industrial) General Plan land use designation.
- The draft zone changes from M-2 to M-1 along the north side of Gage Ave. and along Graham Ave. are consistent with the existing I (Major Industrial) General Plan land use designations.
- The draft zone change from M-1-DP to R-3 on 78th St. is consistent with the existing 3 (Medium Density Residential) General Plan land use designation.
- The draft zone change from C-3, R-2, and R-3 to CPD at the south-east corner of Florence Ave and Crockett Blvd. is consistent with the existing and proposed C (Major Commercial) General Plan land use designation and would put the entire ownership and existing use in the same zone.
- The draft zone change from M-1 to C-3-CRS on Nadeau St. is consistent with the proposed C (Major Commercial) General Plan land use designation.

The Community Standards District establishes development standards and design guidelines intended to mitigate land use conflicts and improve the relationship between various incompatible uses. The Zoning Ordinance provides for these types of ordinances (CSD) for small geographical areas to address unique land use problems. General Plan policies encourage guidelines governing scale and design on a community-by-community basis. Establishing a community standards district is therefore consistent with the policies of the Countywide General Plan.

EXISTING ZONING

The existing zoning in the Florence-Firestone area was first established in the 1940's and consists of various zoning designations, often mixing manufacturing, residential, and commercial zones along the same street.

Large portions of R-3 (Limited Multiple Residence) zoned areas are located at the north-west portions of the community, bounded by Slauson Ave. to the north, the Metro Blue Line to the east, Firestone Ave. to the south and Central Ave. to the west.

The majority of the R-2 (Two Family Residence) zoned areas are located south of Firestone Blvd. and north-east of Florence Ave. R-4 (Unlimited Residence) zoned

properties are primarily located south of Randolph, bounded by Wilmington Ave. to the east, 71st St. to the south and the Metro Blue Line to the west.

A small area of R-1 (Single Family Residence) zoned properties is located directly north of Will Rogers Memorial Park (between E. Century Blvd. and E. 96th St.).

Florence Ave., Firestone Blvd., Central Ave., and Compton Ave. zoning consists of C-2 (Neighborhood Business), C-3 (Unlimited Commercial), and M-1 (Light Manufacturing).

Several properties, west of Beach St., have dual zoning designations. The portions fronting Beach St. are zoned M-1 (Light Manufacturing) and the rear portions are zoned M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing). Additional properties located along Lou Dillon Ave. also have dual zoning. The portions fronting Lou Dillon Ave. are zoned R-3 (Limited Multiple Residence) and the rear portions are zoned M-1 (Light Manufacturing).

The Alameda Corridor is primarily zoned M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing), with a small portion zoned M-1 (Light Manufacturing).

In addition, the area has two special zone designations: the *Blue Line Transit Oriented Districts* (Blue Line TOD) surrounding the stations of Slauson, Florence and Firestone, and the *Roseberry Park Community Standards District* (CSD), located just east of Alameda St. Refer to the zoning history, below, for additional information on these special designations.

ZONING HISTORY

The first land use regulations in the Florence-Firestone area were established in 1926 with the adoption of the Florence Avenue Residence District. The earliest zoned district was Stark Palms established in 1932 (located in the extreme southeastern portion of the community) and by 1946 the complete zoning of the community was completed. Since 1951 there were 7 approved zone changes which expanded the manufacturing zone to the north-east and south.

In the late 1990's two major studies in the area led to the establishment of the *Blue Line Transit Oriented Districts* (Blue Line TOD) and the *Roseberry Park Zoning Recommendations*, which resulted in zone changes and the establishment of community standards.

The Blue Line TOD study resulted in selected zone changes from industrial to commercial or commercial manufacturing and a Transit Oriented District ordinance approximately ¼ mile radius surrounding the rail stations at Slauson Ave., Florence Ave., and Firestone Blvd. Additionally, a variety of zoning incentives were established to encourage pedestrian activities and mixed residential/commercial development.

The Roseberry Park zoning recommendations consisted of zone changes that reflected

the existing land uses, reduced intensity of the industrial uses, and helped achieve the construction of affordable housing. In addition, the CSD helped mitigate the negative impacts of industrial uses in proximity to residential uses.

COMMUNITY STANDARDS DISTRICT PROVISIONS

The Los Angeles County Zoning Ordinance does not address the unique land use issues that exist in the Florence-Firestone community. The creation of a Community Standards District will help alleviate the land use and zoning issues identified by the community. Below is a list of issues:

- Industrial uses are in close proximity and often adjacent to schools, homes, and parks and consequently disturb the activities of these sensitive uses.
- Landscaping in the community is inconsistent or non-existent. Generally, streets and parkways are not landscaped.
- Graffiti and lack of general property maintenance is prevalent throughout the community.
- Signage for commercial and industrial businesses is excessive and inconsistent with the character of the community.
- Housing developments are located in commercial zones and are legal nonconforming uses.

In order to address these problems a draft Community Standards District has been developed. The draft CSD recommends:

- Requiring walls, landscaping buffers, and where possible locating loading docks and entrances away from homes, schools, and parks to protect the quiet of residential areas.
- An increase in the number of uses that would require a conditional use permit in the industrial zones. A conditional use permit would provide a means to conditionally approve a project/use where the use has the potential to create a disturbance to nearby residential areas. Examples of M-1 uses that would require a conditional use permit, which presently are permitted by right, are:
 - Storage of acetylene and oxygen tanks
 - Automobile body and fender repair shops, painting and upholstery
 - Bottling plants
 - Distribution plants
 - Storage of building materials
 - Iron, ornamental iron works
 - Machine shops

- The elimination of the existing nonconforming status of residences in the C-2 and C-3 zones by allowing residential in commercial zones as a permitted use.
- Minimum required landscaping in all zones.
- A requirement that graffiti be removed within 72 hours.
- The CSD includes area specific development standards for Florence Ave. The objective of these standards is to promote a pedestrian environment along this main commercial corridor. Standards related to building design, parking, outdoor advertising signs, and conditionally permitted uses are incorporated in this section.

ZONE CHANGE BURDEN OF PROOF

- A. That modified conditions warrant a revision in the zoning plan as it pertains to the area or district under consideration because:

There are long-standing land use conflicts in the Florence-Firestone area that warrant attention. The area's zoning pattern, which was established in the 1940s, has remained mostly unchanged. To accommodate present and projected conditions in the area zoning must be revised.

- B. That a need for the proposed zone classifications exists within such area or district:

Present zoning allows uses to be established that conflict with the majority of the surrounding uses. Zone designations need to be revised to better match the community's desired land use pattern and existing compatible land uses with the standards and restrictions provided by the Zoning Ordinance.

- C. That the particular property under consideration is a proper location for said zone classification within such area or district: and

All properties subject to this zone change request are of adequate size and shape, as defined by the Zoning Ordinance to accommodate the uses intended under the permitted uses of the respective zones. Adequate infrastructure, including street access is also available to accommodate standards that are associated with a "new" zone.

- D. That placement of the proposed zone at such location will be in the interest of public health, safety and general welfare, and in conformity with good zoning practice.

State law requires zoning to be consistent with the general plan (Government Code Section 65860). Furthermore Section 65862 of the Government Code requires that when local agencies amend the general plan, to the extent possible, concurrent

hearings be held for the required zoning changes.

The proposed zoning pattern separates conflicting land uses, reduces the intensity of industrial uses located near sensitive uses and eliminates split zoning.

The following draft zone changes apply to portions of Florence-Firestone, which will address the conflicting land use patterns and zoning inconsistencies in the area:

- The M-1 zoning along 58th Dr. and 59th St. does not reflect the long-term existence of residential uses. The area does not appear to be heading towards industrial uses and therefore staff recommends 58th Dr. be rezoned to R-2 and 59th St. be rezoned to R-3.
- Zoning along sections of Graham Ave., Maie Ave., and Beach St., allows for more intense industrial land uses than presently exists (i.e. heavy manufacturing is allowed, but some sites are developed with residential, commercial, or light manufacturing uses). As a result staff recommends an M-1 zoning designation.
- The M-1-DP zoning of the property located at 5955 Hooper Ave. is inconsistent with the Los Angeles County General Plan as well as the surrounding land uses. In order to bring zoning into conformance with the General Plan and the surrounding zone, staff recommends an R-3 zoning designation.
- The existing industrial zoning of the parcel on Gage Ave. is incompatible with the surrounding land uses and does not reflect the current development by Merona Development into a shopping Center (Gage Village Shopping). Staff recommends a C-3 zoning designation.
- The existing land uses along Compton and Florence Avenues are primarily for commercial retail uses but are currently zoned industrial. The area does not appear to be developing toward industrial uses, therefore staff recommends these parcels be rezoned to C-3.
- The properties on Lou Dillon Ave. have split zoning (frontage is R-3, rear is M-1), which allows the establishment of conflicting residential and industrial uses on the same parcel. Since the surrounding area is primarily residential, staff recommends that the rear portion of these properties be rezoned to R-3 and thereby eliminate the problems associated with split zoning.
- Parcels located on the west side of Wilmington Ave. are presently zoned M-3. Existing zoning does not conform to existing land uses and there are sensitive uses less than 600 ft. away, such as Lillian St. Elementary School, the newly opened Florence-Holmes Preschool, and nearby residential zones. Staff recommends these parcels be rezoned to M-1 to better reflect existing land uses and protect the nearby sensitive uses.

- Properties on 63rd St. and Gage Ave. (between S. Central and Hooper Ave.) are zoned for heavy industrial. The sites are currently not well maintained and are in proximity to residential uses and a local park. Staff recommends the area be rezoned to M-1 to better reflect existing uses and prevent heavy industrial uses from being established.
- The parks in the area have zoning designations of A-1, R-3 or M-2. Open spaces in urban areas provide for outdoor recreational use. In order to preserve and maintain the existing open spaces, staff recommends the parks be rezoned to O-S.
- The property on 78th Street is zoned M-1-DP and is incompatible with the residential uses on both sides of the street. Staff recommends that the property be zoned R-3 which is consistent with the adjoining properties on 78th St.
- The property at the south-east corner of Florence Ave. and Crockett Blvd. is comprised of several parcels under one ownership and developed as a unified commercial use under a zoning permit. The change to CPD would allow the present use to continue and, with a conditional use permit, expand.
- The property along Nadeau St. between Central and Hooper Avenues is a mixture of residential, commercial and industrial uses. The proposed rezoning to C-3-CRS recognizes the existing predominate uses and will prevent future incompatible industrial uses that could adversely impact the surrounding residential areas.

GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT BURDEN OF PROOF

1. A need for the proposed plan amendment exists because:

Several areas with the industrial land use designation are inappropriate because they consist of small parcels. These areas are primarily developed with residential uses and very few new industrial uses have been developed within this designation.

2. The particular amendment proposed is appropriate and proper because:

An amendment to the General Plan is necessary to prevent uses being established that are incompatible with the surrounding community. To regulate development standards, changes in zoning are also recommended

3. Modified conditions warrant a revision to the County of Los Angeles General Plan because:

Present land uses in the area are comprised of a mixture of single-family and multi-family residences interspersed with commercial and industrial businesses. This

pattern was originally established in the 1940s. As a result, the area has many different and often competing uses. In certain areas, rail lines that previously served industrial uses are no longer in service.

4. Approval of the proposed General Plan Amendment will be in the interest of public health, safety and general welfare and in conformance with good planning practices because:

The land use incompatibilities that have developed in the area have introduced public health, safety and general welfare concerns. Changing industrial designations to commercial or residential will protect residences and sensitive land uses, such as schools and churches, that are located in areas affected by noise, traffic and pollution associated with new heavy industrial uses. Several of the amendments will eliminate situations where parcels are split by land use designations.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

An initial study was prepared on this project in compliance with the state CEQA Guidelines and the environmental reporting procedures of the County of Los Angeles. The amendments to the General Plan either reduce the intensity of the land use designations (e.g. industrial to residential) or reflect existing, less intense land uses and thus, reduce the potential impacts associated with future uses. The proposed zone changes will reduce the intensity of future development by changing industrial zones to commercial or residential zones. The community standards district will require greater review over certain industrial uses and will promote less intense residential uses in commercial zones which will result in reduced environmental impacts. It was determined that these measures will not exceed the established threshold criteria for any environmental/service factor and will not have a significant effect on the physical environment. On the basis of the above, the Department of Regional Planning finds that the proposed project consisting of plan amendments, zone changes and a community standards district qualifies for a Negative Declaration.

The environmental document was made available to responsible agencies and the public for the required 30-day review period. No comments on the environmental document have been received at the time this staff analysis was prepared. **(See Tab F)**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Community Meetings

Three community meetings were held in the Florence Firestone area at various locations **(See Tab G)**. Approximately 10,000 notices were sent to residential property owners and other interested parties for each of the three meetings. The first meeting was held at F.D. Roosevelt Park, Gymnasium, on March 8, 2001 at 6:30 p.m. Over 250 persons attended the meeting and identified the concerns and problems they

experience within their community. The community concerns included the need for enforcement of industrial development standards, trash/debris issues, lack of parking or truck parking on residential streets, lack of landscaping and property maintenance, crime, and graffiti.

The second community meeting was held at Miramonte Elementary School, Auditorium, on February 21, 2002 at 6:30 p.m. Approximately 33 persons from the community were in attendance, in addition to representatives from Regional Planning, Community Development Commission, Public Works, the Sheriff's Department, CHP (California Highway Patrol), and deputies from the First and Second Supervisorial Districts. Staff presented the draft general plan amendments, zone changes and Community Standards District (CSD) that reflected and address the issues identified at the prior meeting. The community supported the commercial, industrial, and residential landscaping requirements proposed in the CSD.

The third and last community meeting was held at Mary McLeod Bethune Park, Gymnasium, on May 16, 2002 at 6:30 p.m. Approximately 70 persons from the community were in attendance, in addition to representatives from Regional Planning, Community Development Commission, Public Works, the Sheriff's Department, CHP, deputies from the First and Second Supervisorial Districts, as well as a representative from the Los Angeles County Chief Administrative Office. The Department of Regional Planning Zoning Enforcement section gave a brief presentation of the process involved when a code violation occurs within the community. The Community Studies section provided a detailed description of the draft zoning recommendations. The Sheriff's Department deputies answered questions related to crime and community concerns. At the conclusion of staff presentations, a question and answer period took place, where the key meeting topics included: code enforcement issues, graffiti, property maintenance, environmental study, Transit Oriented District (TOD), and crime.

Correspondence

Staff has received a number of letters and e-mails relating to the Florence-Firestone Zoning Study. **(See Tab H)**

STAFF EVALUATION/CONCLUSION

The Florence-Firestone Zoning Study was an extensive effort involving several steps. As part of the study, staff conducted a parcel-by-parcel survey of existing land uses that concentrated on commercial and industrial areas adjacent to residential. Staff also researched the zoning and development history of the community to determine any significant trends and changes.

Three community meetings were held to solicit input and to formulate solutions to the land use and zoning issues in Florence-Firestone. For each of the zoning solutions, staff analyzed the implications and presented these findings to the community. As part of the process, staff also reviewed other cities' ordinances to determine various zoning

regulations/treatments for similar land use problems.

During the community meeting process several concerns were raised regarding the proposed zoning recommendations. In most cases, staff was able to make adjustments to respond to the community concerns. In staff's opinion, the Florence-Firestone recommendations are appropriate in order to address long-standing concerns and problems and to update the community's general plan and zoning.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve the amendments to the Los Angeles County General Plan, zone changes, Florence-Firestone Community Standards District, and the Negative Declaration associated with the proposed measures and recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt them.

Attachments:

Tab A: Florence-Firestone Background Report
Tab B: Recommended General Plan Amendments/maps
Tab C: Summary of Recommended Zone Changes/maps
Tab D: Detailed Analysis of Zoning Concerns
Tab E: Draft Community Standards District (CSD)
Tab F: Environmental Documentation
Tab G: Summary of Topics Discussed at Community Meetings
Tab H: Correspondence

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